



# ARECIBO OBSERVATORY

## Fact Sheet

### NSF Environmental Impact Statement and Section 106 Consultation for Proposed Changes to Arecibo Observatory Operations

## Arecibo Observatory Operations

### What is the Proposed Action?

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is conducting public meetings to obtain feedback on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Proposed operational changes due to funding constraints at Arecibo Observatory. A range of alternatives is being considered and evaluated in an EIS. These proposed alternatives include the following:

- Continued NSF investment for science-focused operations (No-Action Alternative)
- Collaboration with interested parties for continued science-focused operations (Preferred Alternative)
- Collaboration with interested parties for transition to education-focused operations
- Mothballing of facilities (suspension of operations in a manner such that operations could resume efficiently at some future date)
- Deconstruction and site restoration

### What is NEPA?

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) requires federal agencies to consider the potential environmental consequences of proposed actions on the environment prior to making final decisions. The NEPA review process is intended to provide the public with an opportunity to comment and provide input on those decisions. On May 23, 2016, NSF announced the beginning of the scoping process and solicitation of public comments to identify issues to be analyzed in an EIS. The purpose of the public scoping process was to determine relevant issues that influenced the scope of the environmental analysis, including identification of viable alternatives. On October 28, 2016 NSF announced the beginning of a 45-day public comment period to solicit comments from the public on the Draft EIS. It is anticipated that, in the Spring of 2017, the Final EIS will be ready for review. No decision will be made until at least 30 days following the issuance of the Final EIS.

### What is Section 106?

NSF has initiated consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) to evaluate potential effects on the Arecibo Observatory, which is a

historic property listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Section 106 of the NHPA requires federal agencies to consult with interested parties and the State Historic Preservation Officer regarding potential effects of their proposed actions on significant historic properties, such as the Arecibo Observatory.

### Who owns, funds, and manages Arecibo Observatory?

NSF owns and funds the Arecibo Observatory and, as a federal agency, is responsible for NEPA compliance. SRI International, with Universities Space Research Association (USRA) and Universidad Metropolitana (UMET), receives funding from NSF via a Cooperative Agreement to operate and maintain the Arecibo Observatory for the benefit of research communities. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) provides additional funding to the Universities Space Research Association (USRA) to support solar system radar studies.

### EIS Timeline

#### Draft EIS public comment period

- 45-day comment period on Draft EIS, starting October 28 and ending December 12, 2016

#### Public meetings on Draft EIS: November 16-17, 2016

- Public meeting November 16, 6:00 p.m. in Arecibo
- Public meeting November 17, 10:00 a.m. in San Juan

#### Final EIS target: Spring 2017

#### NSF Record of Decision target: Summer 2017

### How to Submit Comments

Comments on the DEIS will be accepted through December 12, 2016 and may be submitted during the public meetings or by the following methods:

**Email:** [Envcomp-AST@nsf.gov](mailto:Envcomp-AST@nsf.gov)

**Mail:** Ms. Elizabeth Pentecost, National Science Foundation, Division of Astronomical Sciences, Suite 1045, 4201 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA 22230.

**Additional information will be posted throughout the EIS process at [www.nsf.gov/AST](http://www.nsf.gov/AST).**



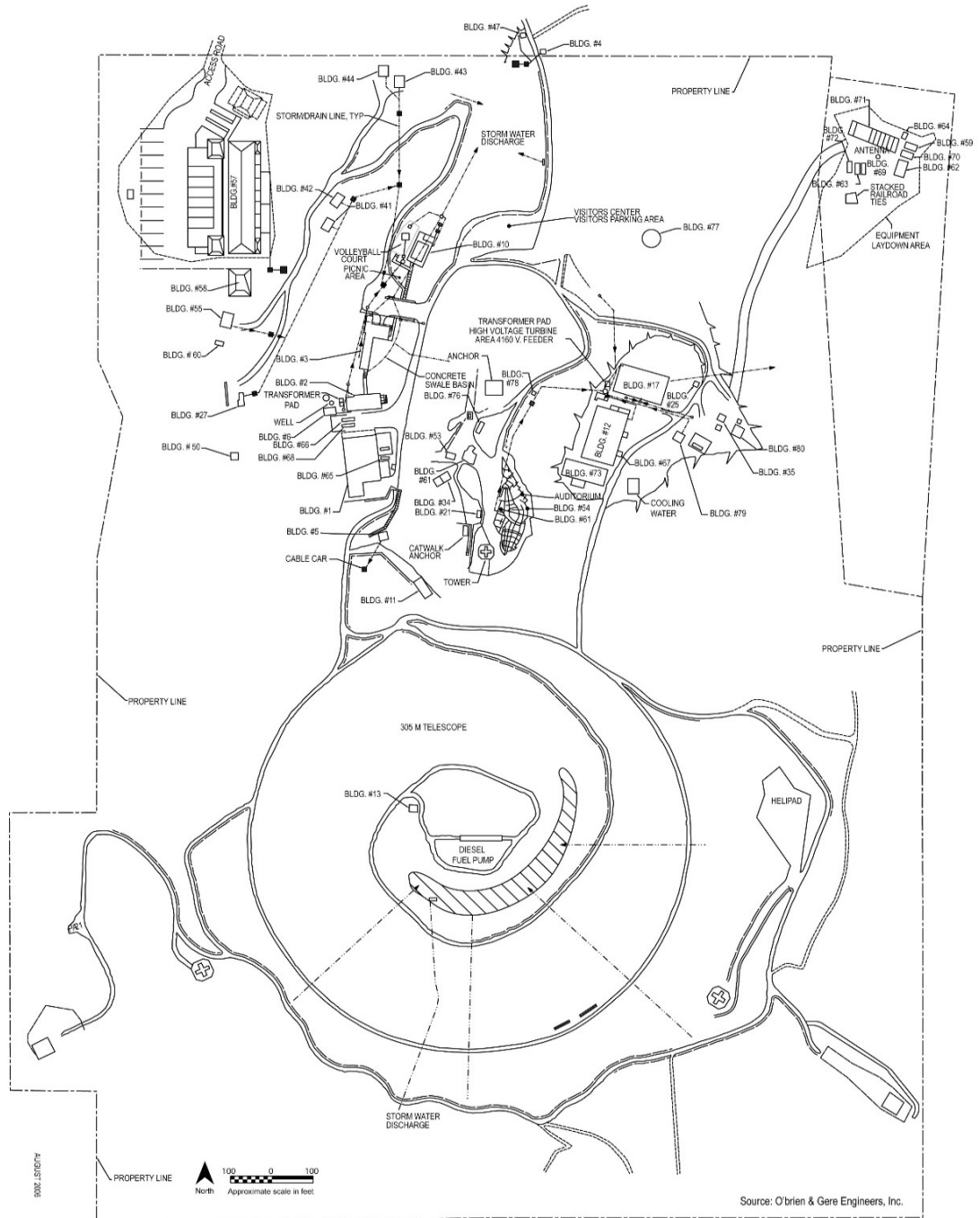
National Science Foundation

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### Site Plan



#### BUILDING NO. DESCRIPTION

- |                                              |                                          |                                     |                                        |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 1. OPERATIONS BUILDING                       | 34. HIGH VOLTAGE POWER SUPPLY BLDG.      | 59. VISITOR CENTER TRAILER          | 76. INSPIRATION FOR SCIENCE TRAILER    |
| 2. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING                   | 35. CUMMINGS GENERATOR CONTROL BLDG.     | 60. ANT. RECE. TESTING BLDG.        | 77. PHASE REFERENCE ANTENNA (12M)      |
| 3. VISITING SCIENTIST QUARTERS AND CAFETERIA | 41. WEST HILL V.S.Q. BACHELOR UNIT NO. 1 | 61. LEARNING CENTER                 | 78. COFFEE HUT                         |
| 4. ENTRANCE GUARD HOUSE                      | 42. WEST HILL V.S.Q. BACHELOR UNIT NO. 2 | 62. HPF STORAGE TRAILER             | 79. ENGINEERING OFFICE BUILDING        |
| 5. CABLE CAR HOUSE                           | 43. WEST HILL V.S.Q. FAMILY UNIT NO. 1   | 63. IONOSPHERE TRAILER              | 80. CUMMINGS DIESEL GENERATOR BUILDING |
| 6. PUMP HOUSE/WATER TREATMENT BLDG.          | 44. WEST HILL V.S.Q. FAMILY UNIT NO. 2   | 64. ELECTRONIC TRAILER              |                                        |
| 10. SWIMMING POOL/RESTROOMS                  | 47. MAIN GATE RESTROOM                   | 65. SHIELDED TRAILER                |                                        |
| 11. LEWIS BUILDING-RIGGING LOFT              | 50. INTERFERENCE MONITORING SHACK        | 66. ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCE TRAILER     |                                        |
| 12. MAINTENANCE SHOPS                        | 51. GREASE PIT                           | 67. CRYOGENICS LAB TRAILER          |                                        |
| 13. BOWL SHACK                               | 53. EMERGENCY GENERATOR BLDG.            | 68. SCIENTIFIC OFFICES TRAILER      |                                        |
| 17. WAREHOUSE                                | 54. VISITOR CENTER BLDG.                 | 69. ELECTRONIC TRAILER (WAVEGUIDE)  |                                        |
| 21. ANTENNA TESTING RANGE                    | 55. LIDAR LABORATORY BLDG.               | 70. COMPUTER TRAILER                |                                        |
| 26. PAINT STORAGE BUILDING                   | 57. NORTH V.S.Q. BLDG.                   | 71. ELECTRONICS CABLE TRAILER       |                                        |
| 27. OPTICAL LABS                             | 58. NORTH V.S.Q. UTILITY BLDG.           | 72. ELECTRONIC TRAILER (CRYOGENICS) |                                        |
|                                              |                                          | 73. HF TRANSMITTER BUILDING         |                                        |